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Snapchat's Ability to Build and Maintain Friendships

Chris Clements
Longwood University

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Chris Clements

Longwood University

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Abstract

In a world of rapidly advancing technology, understanding social media is very important. Snapchat has been able to shed its early negative reputation to become one of the most consistently popular applications on the market. The purpose of this study is to understand how Snapchat users, use the app to build and maintain friendships. The study will also determine how Snapchat effects different levels of social relationships. The qualitative research method was used to conduct interviews of active Snapchat users. The questions required detailed and descriptive answers based on participants past experiences using Snapchat. The data was examined for themes and commonalities, finding that primary interaction on Snapchat is between to strong friends. Interaction with less personal ties is rare to nonexistent. That indicates that interaction on Snapchat, requires a strong social bond on a personal level, before connecting digitally.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how Snapchat users, use the app to build and maintain friendships. The study will also determine how Snapchat effects different levels of social relationships. This introduction provides background knowledge on Snapchat, and affirms the need for research on how the app is used. Not much research has been done on Snapchat alone, and its' rise to social media dominance has made it one of the more important networks to understand.

What is Snapchat?

Snapchat was and is a image and video messaging application on mobile platforms. The app includes the "story" feature which allows users to post images or up to a 10 second video, with captions or filters. Stories can be viewed by anybody that you follow on Snapchat, and disappears in 24 hours. People post stories of anything they are currently doing, fun things, or the situation they are in at the time. Ekman (2015) determined thatSnap video chats engage with the complexity of having contingently moving visual contexts of a number of loosely coupled people converge in a momentarily shared everyday cultural event. Snapchat is also used as a form of communication in personal messages to friends, and that gives a sense of a more personalized message, opposed to a typical text.

Controversies with Snapchat

Early in Snapchat's existence it developed a negative reputation related to "sexting" because of its capability to send images that disappear seconds after the recipient opens the message. Abdi (2015) Snapchat's founders were confident, going into it, about the potential of their app. They saw a need for an ephemeral messaging platform that put the spontaneity back

into the way we communicate on social media. Since 2011, Snapchat has shed the negative reputation by continuing to improve the app's abilities. Snapchat now offers several features to enhance communication including live stories, the discover section, filters and geotags to make it a legitimate social media platform.

Why is Snapchat Important?

Snapchat was invented in 2011 and now has over 100 million current users. The most majority of its users fall under the ages of 18 and 34. Ingram (2015) Snapchat has reached around 6 billion video views a day, and is narrowing the gap between top video competitor Facebook. Snapchat has grown immensely since its debut, and is becoming one of the top social media platforms. It has been adopted by corporations, media outlets, and major networks to provide entertainment, break news, and promote themselves.

Theoretical Grounding

Mongeau & Hennigsen (2008) Although intense bonds sometimes form quickly, the majority of friendships evolve through stages. Interpersonal communications researcher, Bill Rawlins, developed the theory of the six stages of friendship development. At each level of friendship there are different interactions and expectations of two people. Perceptions of individuals on Snapchats, will be different at each level of friendship and will impact one's reputation based on their Snap. Out of all six stages, two stages relate to the one's most common audience on Snapchat.

Moving Toward Friendship

The third stage of friendship is "Moving toward Friendship". Wood (2013) In this stage we start moving beyond social roles. We might make a small self-disclosure to signal we'd

like to personalize the relationship or meet outside of contexts that naturally occur. This represents a majority of Snapchat friendships because its the people who's stories or messages you view because you are not with them, but interested in their lives. Knapp & Vangelisti (2005) Many friendships never move beyond this stage, though they are stabilized as present but casual friendships. This level of friendship involves friends who enjoy interacting with each other, but do not typically set times to spend time together.

Stabilized Friendship

Stabilized Friendship is the fifth stage in the development of friendships. This occurs when there is a mutual level of trust among friends. Spencer & Pahl (2006) State as friendships become stabilized they are often integrated into the larger contexts of each friend's social networks. These close friendships would account for the other set of friends you typically see with people on Snapchat. These are the kinds of people you would send multiple back and forth image messages to. This level of friendship is best described by Walter (2009) when he questioned, how many of them would stay with you in the hospital while you were injured, or let you live with them for three months when you were in need? This level of friendship interaction is the strongest form of all the six levels.

Social Media Use & Patterns

Chan-Olmsted, Moonhee, & Sangwon (2013) researched the trends those heavily involved in social media use. The study concluded that the top four reasons/ways people use social media is for participation, conversation, connectedness, and community. These are all

aspects of real life that individuals strive to achieve, and social media provides a very accessible platform to do so online.

Botterill, Bredin, & Dun (2015) conducted a study on how and reasons behind millennials' social media use. Social media use is spread across a variety of platforms their study found that the majority their participants used at least two different platforms during a 30 minute period. Social media users primarily user computers and mobile phones, which allows users to stay connected with their various platforms in almost any setting.

García-Galera, Del-Hoyo-Hurtado, & Fernández-Muñoz (2014) conducted research to gather information on social media use as well its' potential to evolve to a greater extent. Social media will continue to stay prevalent in society because it provides an outlet for expression. A majority of users use the various platforms to express their opinions on a number of trending topics. The study concluded that the education of young people, and the development of the critical ability to use online networks, will increase the potential of current and future social networks.

Connections & Friendships

Jenson & Sørensen (2013) were intrigued by the value of friendships that exist in social media. An online friend can be very different than a friend in real life. Their study showed that older users tend to use social media to connect with their strong ties, like family, and close core friends. Younger people on the other hand tend to connect with people that they do not have close personal relationships with in real life. Younger justify this by seeing these friends as valuable in the future for networking opportunities.

Cho (2015) looked at communication between friends on social media, and what makes it significant. Public communication with close friends on social media is seen as social media maintenance. That meaning, public posts to friends is not necessarily about the message itself, but to present yourself as actively involved socially with others. The study also found that interactions with weak acquaintances have greater effects on social relationships on social media, than interactions with close friends would have.

García-Galera, et al (2014) was looking at the phenomena of the differences between online friendships, and friendships that exist in real life. It was found that distance separates friendships in the real world, but social media provides a way to stay constantly connected. In a way, there is almost no distance in friendships if they exist in both the real world and on social networks.

Self-Representation

Hynan, Murray, & Goldbart (2014) examined social media use, finding that a lot of social media use can be explained by self-representation. People use Facebook mainly to promote their self-image, knowing that these kinds of representation can have concrete consequences within the offline world. People have a desire to use social media because it is an opportunity to enrich their self-representation, which can directly impact their friendships.

Cho (2015) The study showed that users who spend more time updating their Facebook gain more self-esteem. When people take the time to represent themselves in a positive fashion on social media, it gives them more confidence, knowing that what they choose to put on their profile is what others will associate them with.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do users use Snapchat to build and maintain friendships?

RQ2: How does interaction via Snapchat impact personal and social relationships?

Methodology

Interview Participants

Research for this study was done by conducting interviews because the study required detailed information from active Snapchat users. The interview process provided an accurate understanding of how users interpret social interactions through the many different aspects of the app. The participants for the study were both males and females between the ages of 18 and 23. To be eligible for the interview process, participants were required to use Snapchat on a daily basis. The majority of Snapchat's active users are of the millennial age group and using the app at least once a day allowed the for the most credible data to be collected. All participants were recruited through an online register provided by the Communications Department at Longwood University.

Interview Procedure

The interview sessions each lasted approximately 15 minutes. Each interview section was recorded digitally as well as being transcribed for further analysis. The participants were asked a series of questions that allowed them to develop responses based on their prior experiences with Snapchat. For one particular question, the participants were provided image examples of the different categories of messages often seen on Snapchat. Refer to the appendix for the introductory statement given to the participants prior to the interview session.

Data Analysis Process

After the completion of the interview process, the recordings and transcriptions were further reviewed. The participant's responses were studied by looking for common themes across all interview sessions. The questions were designed to provide data on Snapchat interactions amongst friends, how different messages could be perceived, and how the participants felt about their own posts on Snapchat. Common emotions and interpretations were valued most while analyzing the data. Extremes scenarios to responses were considered, but were held to a lower value.

Results & Findings

To determine exactly how Snapchat impacts social relationships, interviews were conducted on twelve participants. The interviews asked participants in-depth questions that provided detailed responses about their Snapchat interactions. At the conclusion of all the interview sessions, trends and commonalities were seen across many of the sessions. The trends that occurred based on the different themes of the questions including friendship interaction, message perception, individual posts.

Close Friend Interaction

Many of the interview subjects said they only interact with close friends, when it comes to one on one interaction in the app. 58% of the interview participants primarily interacted with what they referred to as their "close friends." One subject stated that their close friends "go to different schools, so snapchat is a great way for me to send pictures or videos." This seemed to be very common when it came to one on one messages that were sent between two individuals.

Stories to View

When questions were asked about Snapchat Stories, the subjects had very similar responses. 66% of the participants were very selective in whose stories they decided to watch, making efforts not to watch those who they were not as close of friends with. Almost every subject would often check if their story had been viewed by anyone after posting it, but a majority of the interviewees valued who particularly viewed they story over a greater quantity of people viewing their story. The interview subjects tended that feel that negatively when particular people do not view their story, specifically when what they define as their, close friends, do not view it. 41% of the subjects always looked for the close friends or potential love interests when looking to see who watched their story. Expectations for story views were very high ranging from participants close friends, to their love interests. It seemed to be viewed negatively when I certain person was expected to view a story, and they did not.

Story Expectations

When the scenario was flipped and the question asked who's stories the subjects watched and why, the answers varied to a degree. 17% of subjects said that they watch every person's Snapchat Story on their feed, but that was not the norm for most. The Snapchat users tended to be very selective when it came to viewing stories. One participant explained that "Yeah I do have a nit pickiness of whose stories I watch and not, I absolutely watch my best friends stories... there are also people that I don't know too well whose stories I try not to view." The levels of the friendship the participants seemed to almost always watch went from average to above average friendships. 58% of the interviewees rarely viewed a person's story who they had a

weak social connection with. Out of the 58% one participant stated “if I do end up watching someones’ story that I’m not close with, its an accident.”

Perceiving Stories and Messages

When it came to how people perceive the type of things they see in Snapchat messages and stories the interview participants generally enjoyed the messages that implemented humor, either in text, or the situation of the image or video. 50% of the interview subjects believed that viewing stories of a social or party setting was a form of showing off, in a way self promotion. One subject said “there are some people who will only post a story when they’re out at a party, and it seems like they trying to rub it in everyone else’s face, like oh look what I’m doing.” While half of the participants perceived stories or messages at a party negatively, but quite 66% admitted to posting stories of themselves in a big social setting whenever they had the opportunity to.

Snapchat’s Personal Reception

The interviews still left a question as to whether the interview participants thought Snapchat was a more personal form of communication than a text. Some people thought the use of image made it more personal, but a few people felt that more often than not, the user themselves is not the image they send out. Something felt by many participants, was that a message was less personal and meaningful when an individual message they receive is mass sent through the sender’s whole friend list. In this situation one subject felt that “you can usually tell when a message is sent to a lot of other people, and especially when it really doesn’t apply to me at all.”

Romantic Relationships

One aspect of Snapchat and social relationships that was not accounted for prior to interview sessions was when romantic relationships are implemented. 16% of the participants interviewed expressed that the main person that they interact with on Snapchat was a significant other. These same people also had specific responses when it came to who viewed their stories and who's stories they viewed. Romance also impacted other aspects for some participants. In one instance, the participant would always watch to story of a "crush", and always hope that the "crush" would watch their posts as well. An entire new study could be done to determine how Snapchat interactions can impact a romantic relationship.

Discussion

Each theme discovered from the interview process offers valuable insight to intended goal of this process. The fact that most of the interview subjects stated that they interact with close friends and majority of the time on Snapchat, could mean that Snapchat may not have as big of an impact on building social relationship, and it may focus entirely on maintaining them, which came up several times looking at the data.

The way that people handled all aspects of Snapchat stories was one of the more interesting parts during the results analysis. Mainly how people react negatively to people who often post stories of big parties or social setting. The fact that the same people who felt negatively about those types of posts, admitted to making the same kinds of posts themselves introduces a double standard, which leaves room for a lot of interpretation. This could be because they are just following a trend of typical posts that they see on Snapchat, or because it has become a tool used for self-esteem or pride. Posting videos out with friends or parties in a way

could show other that one has an active social life, which could improve the way they feel about themselves. The feeling to have to put these types of posts up could be motivated by the ones that they constantly see from other people.

The stories that people choose to view reveals a lot about who users' actual friends really are. The stories that a user watches can be perceived as which friendships they truly value. This same concept applies when a user looks to see who watches their stories. The friends that watch a story can show who values them as a friend, and who genuinely cares about them as an individual.

Being selective on what to watch was a common trend for many participants, and many of did not even watch peoples who they did not know very well. This could be just because the poster can see who has viewed it, or these people just generally do not care about this person's life. Stories included all these tiny actions that could be interpreted many ways, like some people may just view a persons story as a curtesy, like if they used to have a strong relationship. This could even be a way to determine a waning a friendship, when a person completely stops watching another's story.

Nothing was determined on whether Snapchat is a more personal form of communication, one subject even said it was as personal receiving a text message. Others felt that the mass sending of Snapchat messages diminished the personal roles of the messages. The fact that people send messages to a long list of friends, even when they may not completely understand the message, could also come back to curtesy. It could be a way of the sender informing their recipients that they still value them as a social connection.

There is still room for romantic relationships to be study. So many aspects of romance could impact Snapchat use. Like a significant other causing jealousy with the other based on what they have in their Snapchat story. Or the interactions between two people, and how that interaction changes as their romantic relationship grows stronger. It could strongly effect the way people use Snapchat on what they choose to send, and more importantly, what they choose not to send and why exactly.

From the responses received from the interview sessions, something stood out in correlation to the original research questions. While looking to determine how Snapchat is used to build and maintain social relationships, it seems that Snapchat does not assist in building relationships. When it came to who people send messages to or watch stories of, or look to see who has viewed a story, it all involved established relationships. Attention to weaker social relationships rarely came up when the subjects were concerned about their Snapchat interaction. Which makes it seem that Snapchat is primarily a tool to maintain social relationships. For example, when interview participants said that they would only watch average to above average friends' stories, or when they are on a friends' recipient list when a message is mass sent. One on one interaction was also described to be primarily with close friends, opposed to people that the users were just starting to know. In a way, Snapchat interaction with someone can only begin when a strong enough social relationship has been established in the real offline world.

Future Research

A future study on Snapchat and friendships could utilize Stage 6 of Rawlins' Friendship Development Theory. Stage 6, the final stage, is Waning Friendship. This stage starts when a friendship is becoming difficult to maintain, and contact with one another is becoming more and

more rare. Over the course of the interview sessions, this became a theme in many of the categories. Subjects would receive messages that were obviously sent in a mass form, to several people on their list of Snapchat friends. One subject said "I clearly wasn't the only person they sent this too, and it didn't really even apply to me." That type of mass interaction could be further studied to determine if it is an attempt to prevent a waning friendship, or if it is just to maintain some form of interaction as a courtesy. This theme also came up when talking about which Snapchat Stories the interview participants would view. The participants would find themselves commonly viewing a Snapchat Story of someone they had been friends with for a long time. This would happen even if they had not personally interacted with each other in the real world in quite sometime. Is this preventing a friendship from waning, or is it just a courtesy that the users feel they owe their social ties?

Conclusion

Social media has called created a different meaning for the term friend. There is a clear distinction between an offline real world friend, and a friend on social media. Snapchat gives opportunities for friendship interaction most similar to the real world. An outlet primarily for engaging with close friends, but also always its' user t keep tabs on some other not as strong friendships. While most interactions on the app exists between close friends, the ability to maintain weaker relationships with connections is crucial. Snapchat gives some of their users an outlet where they can still include other friends in their lives, even if the personal interaction is diminishing. The app is not a strong tool for building a strong friendship, but once such a relationship is established, the app can be used as a resource to maintain that Stage 5 level of friendship development. The weaker ties that Snapchat users' have as friends on the app, are

there to simply present a kind of “good terms” with one another, but over interaction between those ties would be perceived as overstepping a boundary.

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Appendix

INTRODUCTION STATEMENT TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Thank you everyone for making time to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to understand how Snapchat users, use the app to build and maintain friendships. The study will also determine how Snapchat effects different levels of social relationships. This interview session will be recorded for further analysis, which only the interviewer will have access to. All participants are able to withdraw statements or from the project in its entirety. Everyone will be asked a series of questions directly relating to your use of Snapchat. Statements made during the interview will be confidential, and all participants will remain anonymous when analyzing the results of the study. All digital recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

The following questions will be asked to the participants of the study:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many times a day do you use Snapchat?
2. How do you pick who to interact with on Snapchat?
3. How would you describe the friendships between yourself and the people's whose stories you choose to view?
4. How do you feel after receiving individual messages on Snapchat?
5. How do you perceive different the different kinds of Snapchat posts? Provide examples of selfies, videos, social setting, work, humor, filter use
6. What do you post on Snapchat (in stories or messages) and why?

7. How do you feel based on the status of a self-made post, whether it be checking if a friend has opened a private message?

8. When looking to see who has viewed your Snapchat Story, which do you value more, the number or views, or the specific people who view it?

**LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board
Committee Action Form**

Proposal Title: Snapchat's Ability to Build and Maintain Friendship

Principal
Investigator:

Chris
Clements

.....

(For IRB Use Only)

- Meets the criteria for making research exempt from obtaining written informed consent and Committee review.
- Approved by the Longwood University Institutional Review Board.
- Approved with revisions by the Longwood University Institutional Review Board.
- Rejected by the Longwood University Institutional Review Board.

Date:

Signature of IRB (circle one) Member/Chair: _____

Comments:

**Longwood University Institutional Review Board
Research Proposal Submission Form**

I. Proposal

All Longwood University administration, faculty, and students conducting investigations involving human subjects, and all other researchers conducting investigations involving human subjects at Longwood University, must submit a research proposal to be reviewed and approved by the Human Subject Research Committee prior to the commencement of research. Research involving children should conform to the ethical standards found at <http://www.srcd.org/ethicalstandards.html>. **Some types of human subjects research are exempt from the provisions of state and federal law, however, even research exempt from these provisions must be reviewed by the committee to determine that they are indeed exempt.** Research proposals submitted to the committee must follow the protocols contained in this form and include the following information. *Check those that are included.*

A description of the research, including:

- 1) A Title,
- 2) The purpose of the research, and
- 3) The methods or procedures to be employed including descriptions of:
 - a) The human subjects and the criteria for including them in the research,
 - b) What is to be done with or to them,
 - c) Any possible risks, stress, or requests for information subjects might consider personal or sensitive, or which may be illegal, and whether or not the only risk to the subjects is the harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality,
 - d) the steps that will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects,
 - e) the permissions from other institutions, if required, that will be obtained.

A signed, completed copy of this submission form.

In addition, the research proposal may have to include the following documents. *Check those that are included.*

A copy of the test, survey, or questionnaire, if employed, and if it is not a standardized professional diagnostic tool otherwise specified in the proposal.

A copy of the written statement explaining the research indicating that participation is voluntary, if required. (See III. A. below.)

A copy of what will be said to subjects before and after the research is conducted, if the methodology requires that the subjects be misled in any way. (See III. B.)

A copy of the informed consent statement that will be used, if required. (See Sec. IV. below.) A model informed consent statement can be found at the end of this form.

II. Exemptions

If your research falls into any of the categories of research below, it is exempt from the requirement of obtaining written informed consent and being reviewed by the entire Committee, and only 1 copy of the proposal need be submitted. All others must submit 3 copies of their proposal. If your project conforms to any of the following descriptions, check those which apply:

Research or student learning outcomes assessments conducted in educational settings involving regular or special education instructional strategies, the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods, or the use of educational tests, whether cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement, if the data from such tests are recorded in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Research involving survey or interview procedures unless responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals

with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

- Research involving survey or interview procedures, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.
- Research involving solely the observation of public behavior, including observation by participants, unless observations are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.
- Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

III. Special Types of Research

A. In addition to the above types of research that are exempt from the requirement to obtain written informed consent and full committee review, the committee may waive the requirement that the investigator obtain written informed consent for some or all subjects for the following type of research. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

- Research in which the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

In the forgoing type of research, the committee may require the investigator to provide the subjects with a written statement explaining the research and indicating that their participation is voluntary. In addition, each subject shall be asked whether s/he wants documentation linking him or her to the research, and the subject's wishes shall govern. In the case that the subject agrees to be identified in the research, her or his written permission to do so shall be obtained by the researcher.

B. Some research methodologies may require that the subjects be initially misled regarding the purpose of the research, and so require that the consent procedure omit or alter some or all of the basic elements of informed consent, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

- Research involves no more than "minimal risk" or risk of harm not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests, research could not practicably be performed without the omission, alteration or waiver, and the omission, alteration or waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

In the forgoing type of research, the committee requires the researcher to provide the subjects with an adequate post-investigative explanation of the purpose and methods of the research, or explanatory debriefing procedure to be undertaken immediately after the conclusion of each subject's participation. The committee requires investigators undertaking this sort of research to furnish the committee with copies of the information that will be supplied to the subject before and after the investigation.

IV. Written Informed Consent

Research engaged in all other types of research must obtain written informed consent from the research subjects. Informed consent means the knowing and voluntary agreement, without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or other form of constraint or coercion, of a person who is capable of exercising free power of choice.

The basic elements of information necessary to such consent are:

- 1. A reasonable and comprehensible explanation to the person of the proposed procedures of protocols to be followed, their purposes, including descriptions of any attendant discomforts, and risks and benefits reasonably to be expected;
- 2. A disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures or therapies that might be advantageous for the person;
- 3. An instruction that the person may withdraw his consent and discontinue participation in the human research at any time without prejudice to her or him;
- 4. An explanation of any costs or compensation which may accrue to the person and, if applicable, the availability of third party reimbursement for the proposed procedures or protocols; and
- 5. An offer to answer and answers to any inquiries by the person concerning the procedures and protocols.

Informed consent must be obtained in the following manners for the following types of human subjects: (a) competent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person and witnessed; (b) not competent at the time consent is required, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person's legally authorized representative and witnessed; or (c) a minor otherwise capable of rendering informed consent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by both the minor and her or his legally authorized representative.

Legally authorized representative means (a) the parent or parents having custody of a prospective subject, (b) the legal guardian of a prospective subject, or (c) any person or judicial or other body authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject's participation in the particular human research.

Any person authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject's participation in the particular human research shall include an attorney in fact appointed under a durable power of attorney, to the extent the power grants the authority to make such a decision. The attorney in fact shall not be employed by the person, institution, or agency conducting the human research. No official or employee of the institution or agency conducting or authorizing the research shall be qualified to act as a legally authorized representative.

A legally authorized representative may not consent to nontherapeutic research, or research in which there is no reasonable expectation of direct benefit to the physical or mental condition of the human subject, unless it is determined by the human subject research review committee that such research will present no more than a minor increase over minimal risk to the human subject.

Notwithstanding consent by a legally authorized representative, no person who is otherwise capable of rendering informed consent shall be forced to participate in any human research.

In the case of persons suffering from organic brain diseases causing progressive deterioration of cognition for which there is no known cure or medically accepted treatment, the implementation of experimental courses of therapeutic treatment to which a legally authorized representative has given informed consent shall not constitute the use of force.

No informed consent form shall include any language through which the person who is to be the human subject waives or appears to waive any of her or his legal rights, including any release of any individual, institution, or agency or any agents thereof from liability for negligence.

Human subject research investigators are responsible for obtaining written informed consent from research subjects in accordance with these specifications, and for obtaining permissions from any other institutions that may be involved in informed consent statement which conforms to these specifications.

The Longwood University Institutional Review Board must be informed of any violation or alteration of the research protocol. Continuing research projects must be re-approved annually.

The undersigned researcher(s) indicate that the information provided to the committee is accurate and true to the best knowledge of the researcher(s), and that the researcher(s) have conformed to the above guidelines to the best abilities of the researcher(s).

Date: _____ Signed (legibly): _____

Date: _____ Signed (legibly): _____

If this research is being completed in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree, the thesis committee must approve of your project prior to submission of these forms. The signature(s) of your committee chair/advisor on the appropriate form constitutes acknowledgement of this prior approval by your committee.

Please indicate the address where you would like the approval form sent (along with phone # and/or e-mail address):

Further information of the status of proposals may be found at the following:

Dr. Eric Laws, Department of Psychology; Phone: (434)395-2841; e-mail: lawsel@longwood.edu

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

Title of Research: Snapchat's Ability To Build and Maintain Friendships.

- Purpose of Research: The goal of this research is **understand how Snapchat users, use the app to build and maintain friendships as well as to determine how Snapchat effects different levels of social relationships**. The research is being conducted as a **Qualitative study, where I will be conducting interviews of people who use Snapchat daily**, under the supervision of **Alec Hosterman**.
- Methods and Procedures:
 - Participants: Participants will be Longwood University students who agree to voluntarily participate in the research. The purpose of the research will be explained to the students and they will be asked to participate with the provision that they are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants will be Longwood University Communications students, who will be recruited online by providing a description of my study. Willing participants will be able to sign up for the study through a spreadsheet set up by the Communications Department.
 - Procedures: **I plan to interview willing participants in the Communications Department, that are very active (daily) users of Snapchat. The interview sessions will be digitally recorded for further analysis and the participants will be informed of the recording before the session starts. Only I will have access to the interview recordings for the duration of study.**
 - Possible Risks: It is anticipated that participants will be at no physical, psychological, or emotional risk at any time during the research. Nor is it anticipated that participation in the research will place the participants at any risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the participants' financial standing or employability.
- Assurance of Anonymity and Confidentiality: Participants will be informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research via instructions on the data collection instrument. Participants will also be instructed not to put their name or any identifying information on the instrument. When collecting data from participants, the researcher will immediately place the data in a large envelope, and will not examine any of the data until all data have been collected. Once collected, the raw data will only be accessible to **Chris Clements and Alec Hosterman**. In the event that any information provided by a participant should become known outside the research, it is unlikely that any harm would come to the participant.

Longwood University
Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research

I consent to participate in the research project entitled:

Snapchat's Ability to Build Friendships

being conducted in the **Communication DEPARTMENT** by

Chris Clements

- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to discontinue participation in this project without penalty.
- I acknowledge that the general purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me.
- I acknowledge that I have the opportunity to obtain information regarding this research project, and that any questions I have will be answered to my full satisfaction.
- I understand that no information will be presented which will identify me as the subject of this study unless I give my permission in writing.
- I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me.

Name (Print):

Date: 2/23/16 Signed:

I understand that if I have concerns or complaints about my treatment in this study, I am encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood University at (434) 395-2010.

Institutional Review Board, Research Proposal Submission Form

If this research is being completed in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree, the thesis committee must approve of your project prior to submission of these forms. The signature(s) of your committee chair/advisor below constitutes acknowledgement of this prior approval by your committee.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____ Signed: _____